Committee on Community Colleges and Workforce

Meeting
Tuesday, February 7, 2006
1:15 PM – 2:45 PM
Room 24, House Office Building

<u>MEETING PACKET</u>

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Allan G. Bense, Speaker

Community Colleges & Workforce Committee

Pat Patterson
Chair

Ed Jennings
Vice Chair

Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, February 7, 2006
24 HOB, 1:15 PM – 2:45 PM

I.   **Call to Order & Roll Call**

II.   **Opening Remarks by Chair Patterson**

III.   **Consideration of the following bill:**

      HB 373 by Representative Harrell
      Tuition Waivers

IV.   **Presentations on Workforce Readiness Skills and Credentials:**

      Curtis Austin, President
      Workforce Florida, Inc.

      Kathie Schmidt, Director
      Career and Technical Education, St. Lucie School District

      Jodi Geiger, Agriscience Teacher
      Pine Ridge High School, Volusia School District

      Susan Miller, Principal
      Learey Technical Center, Hillsborough School District

      Don Payton
      Seminole Community College

      Diane Lindsey, Regional Sales Director
      Worldwide Interactive Network (WIN)

V.   **Closing Comments**

VI.   **Meeting Adjourned**

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- o ECC Issue Brief on Workforce Readiness
- o *"Ready ... Not"* a Human Resource Executive Article
- o Workforce Readiness Credential Project Information
- o News Clips

Tab 1

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 373   Tuition Waivers
SPONSOR(S): Harrell and others
TIED BILLS: None   **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 122

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
1) Military & Veteran Affairs Committee	8 Y, 0 N	Marino	Cutchins
2) Community Colleges & Workforce Committee		Thomas *MDT*	Ashworth *Qfa*
3) Education Appropriations Committee			
4) State Administration Council			
5)			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

HB 373 establishes a new tuition fee waiver for recipients of the Purple Heart in s. 1009.26, F.S. Section 1009.26, F.S. specifically provides fee waivers for universities and community colleges.

HB 373 allows state universities and community colleges to waive undergraduate tuition for a recipient of a Purple Heart who:
- Is admitted as a full-time, part-time, or summer-school student in an undergraduate program of study leading to a degree or certificate.
- Is currently a Florida resident and at the time of the military action that resulted in them receiving the Purple Heart was a Florida resident.
- Submits documentation verifying that they are a recipient of the Purple Heart to the community college or university.

The Purple Heart is awarded to any member of the Armed Forces or any civilian national under the United States who has been wounded in combat. The U.S military recognizes order of precedence of awards and the Purple Heart is listed in the 16th position. The Purple Heart is unique in that an individual is not recommended for, but rather is entitled to this decoration when wounded in combat. The Florida Department of Veterans Affairs reported that 2,482 Purple Heart recipients have membership with the Florida Chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart and currently reside in Florida. All recipients are not members in the Military Order of the Purple Heart. They are unable to provide an actual number of recipients or how many resided in Florida at the time they were awarded the Purple Heart.

There appears to be no fiscal impact on 2006-2007 since this benefit begins in the 2007-2008 academic year. However, the fiscal impact in 2007-2008 could be as high as approximately $5,329,102.

The bill would take effect July 1, 2006.

This document does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill sponsor or House of Representatives.
STORAGE NAME: h0373.CCW.doc
DATE: 1/26/2006

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. HOUSE PRINCIPLES ANALYSIS:

Ensure Lower Taxes – This bill would waive undergraduate tuition fees for Purple Heart recipients in Florida.

Empower Families – This bill would increase the opportunity for recipients of the Purple Heart who return home wounded to learn a new skill to support family and find self worth.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation:

Fee Waivers
Section 1009.26, F.S., lists fee waivers for postsecondary educational institutions. School districts, community colleges, university boards of trustees, the State Board of Education, and state universities may waive certain fees, such as tuition or application fees, charged to students and, in some cases, only on a space-available basis.

Those eligible for certain fee waivers under this section can include: persons who supervise student interns for a state university; full-time university employees; Florida residents 60 years of age or older; graduate students enrolled in certain state-approved school psychology training programs; certain out-of-state nondegree-seeking students; certain spouses of deceased state employees; and some active members of the Florida National Guard (FNG). Section 1009.26(8), F.S., specifically mentions the fee waiver for certain members of the FNG and references s. 250.10(8), F.S., which establishes the State Tuition Exemption Program (STEP) program. The Florida Department of Education reports that 82[1] community college students used the National Guard Fee Waiver in 2004-2005.

Purple Heart
The Purple Heart was established by General George Washington during the Revolutionary War. The Purple Heart is awarded to any member of the Armed Forces or any civilian national of the United States who has been wounded in combat. A wound can be an injury to any part of the body from an outside force or agent. Injuries which clearly justify receiving the Purple heart include, but are not limited to, injury caused by mine or trap, or enemy released chemical, biological, or nuclear agent. A person will not be eligible for the Purple Heart for certain wounds or injuries such as battle fatigue, heat stroke, or disease not directly caused by enemy agents. The Purple Heart is unique among other military awards, in that an individual is not recommended for, but rather is entitled to the decoration.

The U.S. military recognizes order of precedence of awards. Each award carries a level of significance and its own eligibility requirements. The Purple Heart is 16th in order of precedence according to Army Regulation 670-1, updated February 2005. The awards in precedence from Medal of Honor to the Purple Heart are:

(1) Medal of Honor (Army, Navy, Air Force);
(2) Distinguished Service Cross;
(3) Navy Cross;
(4) Air Force Cross;
(5) Defense Distinguished Service Medal;
(6) Distinguished Service Medal (Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard);
(7) Silver Star;

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[1] Florida Department of Education correspondence. January 13, 2006.

(8) Defense Superior Service Medal;
(9) Legion of Merit;
(10) Distinguished Flying Cross;
(11) Soldier's Medal;
(12) Navy and Marine Corps Medal;
(13) Airman's Medal;
(14) Coast Guard Medal;
(15) Bronze Star Medal; and
(16) Purple Heart.

The Florida Department of Veterans Affairs reported that 2,482 Purple Heart recipients are registered members of the Florida Chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart and currently reside in Florida. They are unable to provide an actual number of recipients who are not registered or how many resided in Florida at the time they were awarded the Purple Heart.

Effect of Proposed Changes:

HB 373 establishes a new tuition fee waiver for recipients of the Purple Heart in s. 1009.26, F.S. Section 1009.26, F.S. specifically provides fee waivers for universities and community colleges.

HB 373 allows state universities and community colleges to waive undergraduate tuition for recipient of a Purple Heart who:
- Is admitted as a full-time, part-time, or summer-school student in an undergraduate program of study leading to a degree or certificate.
- Is currently a Florida resident and, at the time of the military action that resulted in receipt of the Purple Heart, was a resident of the State of Florida
- Submits documentation verifying that they are a recipient of the Purple Heart to the community college or university.

HB 373 would take effect July 1, 2006, although the fee waiver would not be available to Purple Heart recipients until the 2007-2008 academic year.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1:   Creates 1009.26(9), F.S., establishing a Purple Heart recipient undergraduate tuition waiver for state universities or community colleges beginning in the 2007-2008 academic year under certain circumstances.

Section 2:   Provides an effective date of July 1, 2006.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

   None

2. Expenditures:

   The impact on state expenditures in 2007-2008 is indeterminate since it is unknown how many received the Purple Heart and resided in Florida at the time they received the award. It is also unknown how many will use the benefit in this bill.

   In the community college funding process, these waivers would be deducted from student fees from the Community College Program Fund and would eventually be funded by the state.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

    1. Revenues:

    None

    2. Expenditures:

    None

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

The chart shows the average savings per semester for a full-time, part-time, and summer student under this bill based on average credit hours[2].

	Community College $47.72 per credit hour	State University $71.57 per credit hour
Full-time (12.48 avg. Credit Hours)	$595.55	$893.19
Part-time (6.02 avg. Credit Hours)	$287.27	$430.85
Summer (5.9 avg. Credit Hours)	$281.55	$422.26

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

According to the 2005-2006 General Appropriations Act, the costs per credit hour for community colleges and state universities for the 2005-2006 fall/spring terms are $47.72 and $71.57 respectively.

The calculations in this analysis are based on the 2005-2006 GAA figures; however, the waiver created in this bill would not go into effect until the 2007-2008 academic year.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

    1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

    The bill does not require counties or municipalities to spend funds or to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds. This bill does not reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with counties or municipalities. This bill does not reduce the authority that municipalities have to raise revenues.

    2. Other:

    None

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE & COMBINED BILL CHANGES

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[2] Florida Department of Education correspondence. January 12, 2006.

1   A bill to be entitled

2   An act relating to tuition waivers; amending s. 1009.26,

3   F.S.; requiring community colleges and state universities

4   to waive tuition for a recipient of a Purple Heart who

5   fulfills specified criteria; providing an effective date.

6

7   Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

8

9   Section 1. Subsection (9) is added to section 1009.26,

10   Florida Statutes, to read:

11   1009.26 Fee waivers.--

12   (9) Beginning in the 2007-2008 academic year, a state

13   university or community college shall waive undergraduate

14   tuition for each recipient of a Purple Heart who:

15   (a) Is admitted as a full-time, part-time, or summer-

16   school student in an undergraduate program of study leading to a

17   degree or certificate;

18   (b) Is currently, and was at the time of the military

19   action that resulted in the awarding of the Purple Heart, a

20   resident of this state; and

21   (c) Submits to the community college or university

22   documentation verifying that the student has received a Purple

23   Heart.

24   Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2006.

hb0373-00

Tab 2
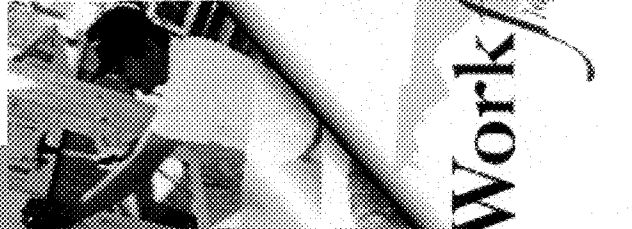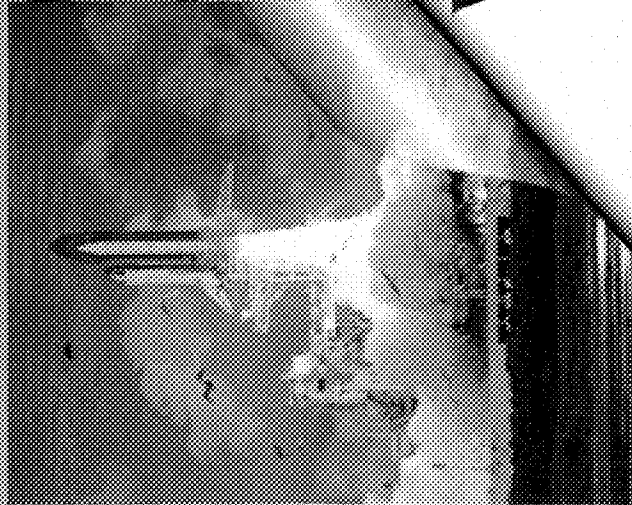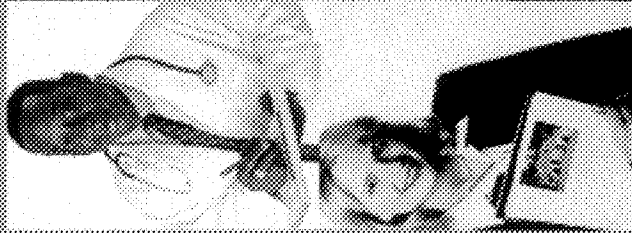
Work*force*

WORK READINESS CREDENTIAL PROJECT:

MEETING THE DEMAND FOR 21ST CENTURY WORKERS

www.workforceflorida.com

Work Readiness Credential Project

Work*force* *Florida Inc.*

THE PROJECT – WHAT IT IS

A national, portable credential that

- *Defines,*
- *Measures, and*
- *Certifies*

Job seekers have the knowledge, skills and abilities they need to succeed in entry-level work in the 21st Century workplace.

Work Readiness Credential Project

Work*force*

WHY WE ARE INVOLVED

Business Defines the Skills Gaps:

- 69% have inadequate basic employability skills—attendance, timeliness, work ethic
- 32% have inadequate reading/writing skills
- 26% have inadequate math skills
- 24% have inadequate English language skills
- 22% inability to work in a team environment

NAM (The *"Skills Gap"* Report 2001 & 2005)

- Top Business Issue of Concern – survey of 3 million business members

U.S. Chamber of Commerce (June 2005)

Work Readiness Credential Project

Work*force* florida, inc.

WHY WE ARE INVOLVED

- To integrate educational reform and workforce efforts in Florida.

- Many workers do not currently possess any portable credential that has credence with the business community.

- To save time and money for businesses and employees in obtaining employment.

Work Readiness Credential Project

WHY OTHERS ARE INVOLVED

- Alternative to education reform (Going Around the Problem)

- Tired of Reform without Research (Trying to do this Right)

- Responding to Business Community's need for National Portability (Unifying state efforts)

The Partnership

- In 2002 policy makers from four states (Florida, New Jersey, New York, Washington) joined together with the National Institute for Literacy and national business leaders to find a solution to a problem brought to us by businesses in our communities. The District of Columbia, Rhode Island and Junior Achievement have since invested in the project.

- National advisors include: Center for Workforce Development (Institute for Educational Leadership), Center for Workforce Preparation (U.S Chamber of Commerce), Center for Workforce Success (National Association of Manufacturers), National Association of Workforce Boards, National Governors Association, and National Retail Federation Foundation.

Built to the specifications of Business

- To find out what mattered on the frontline, we conducted a year-long research process in businesses within Florida, New Jersey, New York and Washington.

- Research results were then vetted with representatives of businesses, chambers, and industry associations from across the country. The consensus was that what was important for entry-level workers was a strong foundation of critical skills.

Critical Skills identified by Business

- Read for Understanding
- Use Math to Solve Problems
- Listen Actively
- Speak so others can Understand
- Observe Critically
- Cooperate with Others
- Resolve Conflict and Negotiate
- Solve Problems and Make Decisions
- Take Responsibility for Learning

What is outside the focus?

Advanced Leadership Skills

Advanced Business Skills

Advanced Interpersonal Skills

Advanced Technical Skills

Basic Work-Related Technical Skills

Equipped for the Future Work Readiness Credential

Basic Workplace Skills

Basic Workplace Knowledge

Basic Employability Skills

Lifelong Learning Skills

Work Readiness Credential Project

Work_force_ Inc.
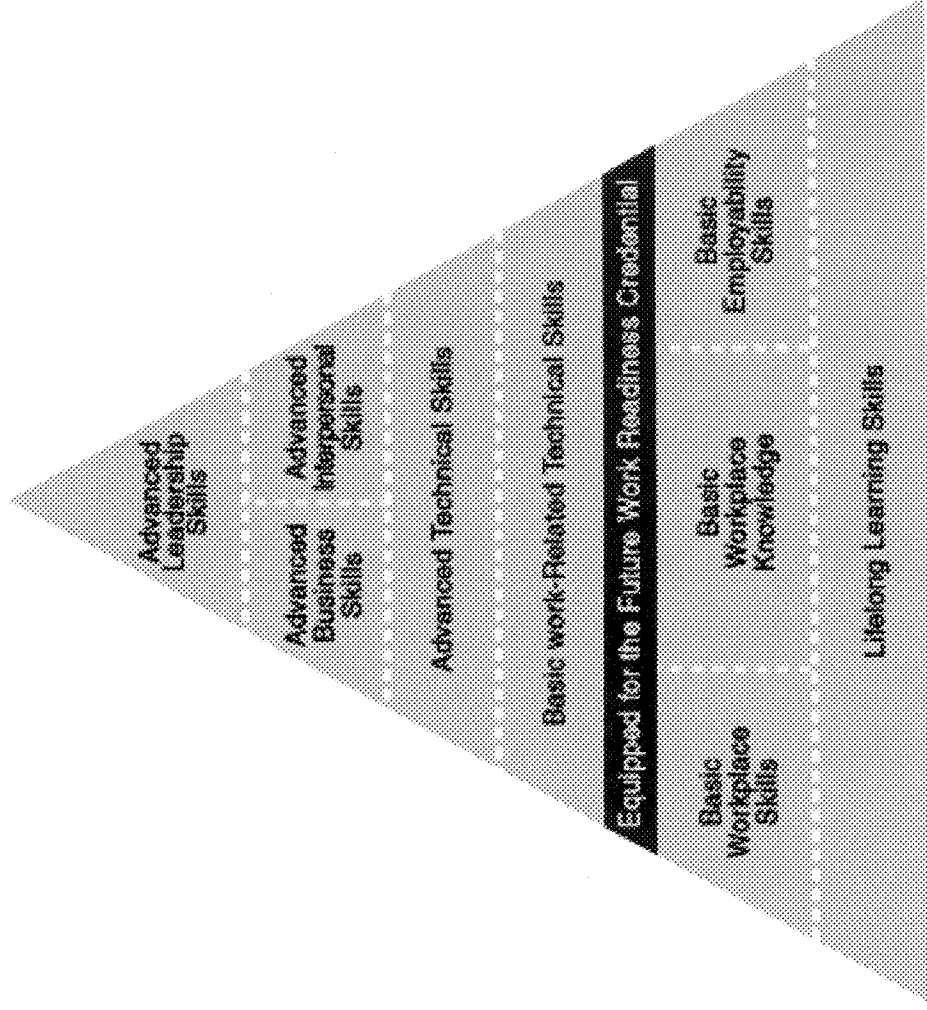
CONSIDER THIS.........

➢ Jobs for the unskilled are declining as technology increasingly replaces those workers.

➢ Technology allows work to move to workers anywhere.....anywhere on the globe.

➢ We must use our human and technical resources more effectively due to global competition.

➢ More workers are retiring than entering the labor market.

➢ USDOL estimates that one-third of those working in the field of construction speak English as a second language

Work Readiness Credential Project

Work*force*

CONSIDER THIS.........

➤ Increase in number of H1B Visas to immigrants.

➤ Northeastern University in Boston reported that from June to August 2004, slightly less than 42 percent of the nation's teens were employed during a typical month. That tied with the summer of 2003 for the lowest employment rate for teens during the past 57 years. In 1989, teen employment reached a high of about 57 percent.

➤ The *No Child Left Behind* legislation is a push for improved academic performance. Educators who work with at-risk youth argue that the academic standards are too challenging, but others argue that today's workplace require higher skill levels.

Work Readiness Credential Project

Work_force_ Florida, inc.

THE WRC ASSESSMENT

- Designed to assess both English-speaking and non-English speaking person

- 90-120 minutes in length

- Web-based, with on-line portfolio to document personal & professional development

- Modular design for easy use and customized to local conditions

- Field tested in three Florida sites with 100 businesses

Work Readiness Credential Project

Workforce *business, inc.*

BOTTOM LINE BENEFITS TO BUSINESS

- Streamlines the hiring process

- Reduces recruitment costs

- Minimizes turnover

- Lowers training costs

- Improves productivity and increase profits

Work Readiness Credential Project

Work*force*

HOW WILL IT HELP JOB SEEKERS?

- Identifies the skills needed to carry out work tasks

- Demonstrates skills needed for successful entry-level work performance

- Builds upon academic education—both high school and postsecondary education

- Works well with other occupationally-specific assessments

Work Readiness Credential Project

Work*force*

WHAT'S NEXT – ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Credential Design Delivery System – Implementation Issues

- Where will it be offered?
  - One Stops? Community Colleges? Other Partners' sites?
  - Criteria for sites, equipment requirements, staff requirements
- What will it cost?
- Who takes the assesment? Workforce clients, youth, existing workers?
- How will the credential be awarded and by whom?

Tab 3

Work Certified™

Enhancing the Spirit of America's Workforce

What's it all about?

- National Work Readiness Program
- Provides job seekers with credentials employers require in today's workforce
- Provides employers work ready applicants with:
  - Good work ethics
  - Motivation
  - initiative

Program Goals

- To verify and teach skills and behaviors to entry-level employees
- Establishes benchmarks of skillsets
- Resulting in:
  - Increased productivity
  - Decreased employee turnover
  - Less time spent attempting to teach basics

Developed in partnership with:

National Skills Standards Board

Treasure Coast and Palm Beach County
Business Community

Local Educators
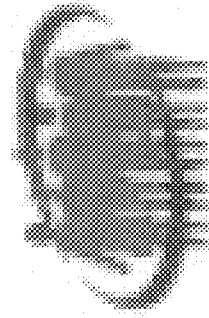
Workforce Development Board
of the Treasure Coast

Curriculum Components

- Reading Comprehension
- Business Tools / Computers Plus
- Business Math
- Pre-Employment
- Customer Service

- Business Writing
- Job Skills I
- Job Skills II (Work Maturity and Employability Skills
- General Business Knowledge

Job Skills I

- Business profitability
- Proper work habits
- Effect of tardiness and absenteeism
- Importance of ethics
- Self-management tools
- How lifestyle effects work

- Workplace skills for success
- Proper attire and grooming
- Importance of learning on the job
- Continuing education
- Solutions to problems

Job Skills II

- Structure of work
- Supervisors
  - Their role
  - Communicating
  - Expectations
- Working effectively as a team member
- Getting along with coworkers

- Asking questions
- Coaching on the job
- Creative Problem-solving
- Collecting data & reporting results
- Raises / promotions
- Netiquette

Business & Industry
originated and focused......
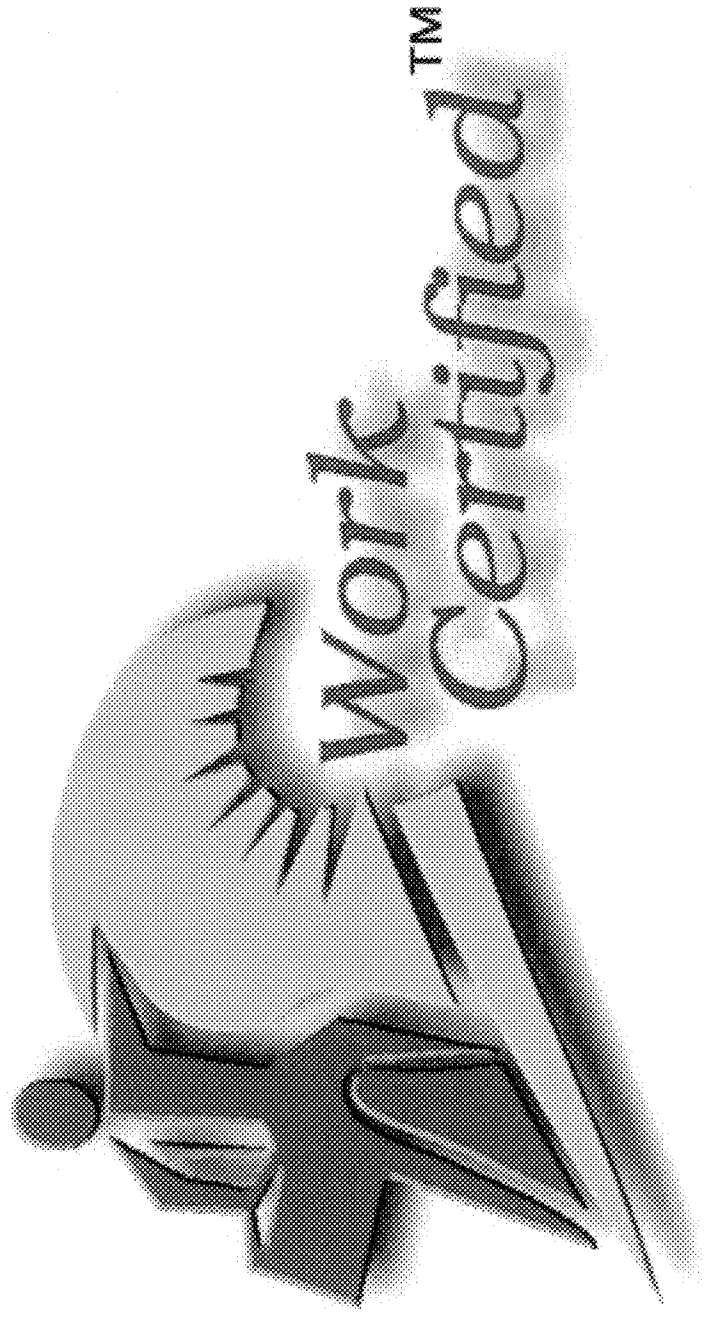
Work Certified™

A satisfied employer writes...

"We found that most employees did not have the basic skills or fundamentals expected of them. The graduates of *Work Certified* have a positive attitude, an overall understanding of how a company operates, work ethics, and a good foundation of basic reading, writing and math. Our help wanted ads specify "*Work Certified* Preferred" and our new hires are truly work ready."

High School Students comments:

- "My *Work Certified* teacher was the best! She taught us what employers expect from us in the workplace and made me realize that there are additional skills that I need to be successful in the real work world."

- "I now have the confidence in myself to look for a job and the questions to ask the employer."

- "This course encouraged me to seek further education and develop my learning skills."

- "Now I know about proper attire and attitude."

- "The Business Math helped me pass the FCAT!!"

Why "Certified"?

- Certification not only offers a means for communicating standards required and standards reached, it gives the student / job seeker an advantage when they enter the workplace.

- Provides employers with a systematic process for recruiting, screening, and quality improvement.

Principles of Meaningful Certification

- Quality- tied explicitly to industry standards that are recognized and valued.

- Valid- assessments accurately reflects the standards and the degree of significance

- Reliable – performance on assessment is closely tied to performance in the field

- Fairness- assessment is free of gender, ethnic, and racial bias.

- Current- continuously evaluated and updated

Why *Work Certified?*

- Other types of Certificates
  - Single industry focus
    - Culinary / ACF, Automotive / ASE, Mfg / MSSC, IT / A+
  - Career Cluster focus
    - SkillsUSA = CTE + employability skills, NOCTI
  - Special Competencies / OSHA
- "Work Certified"
  - Basic skills + work ethics + positive attitude + motivation + general business essentials

Where are we now?
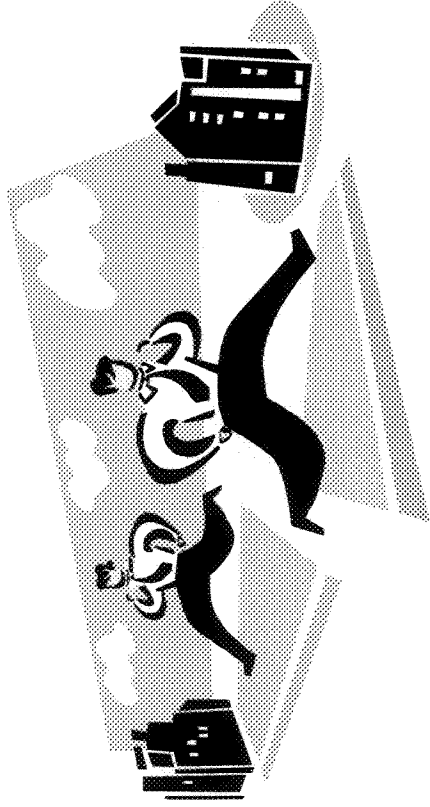
- 6 Certified Trainers
- 98 Certified Teachers / Instructors
- 434 out-of-area students certified
- 411 local One-Stop participants certified
- 60 Treasure Coast youth certified

Where are the Graduates?
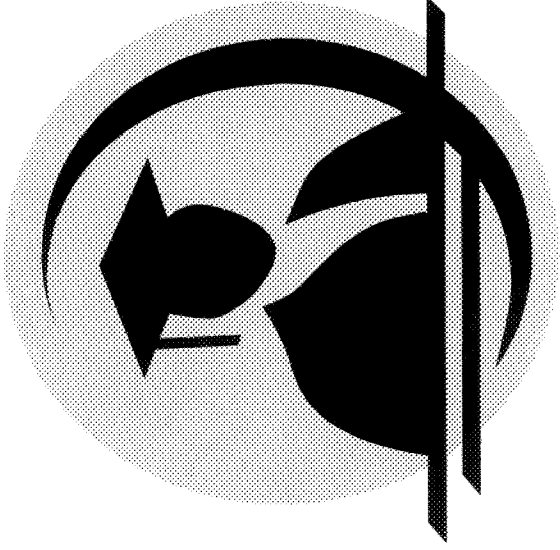
- 98% found employment within 30 days after graduation

- 86% still employed six months later

- 30% have received promotions

Who's using it?
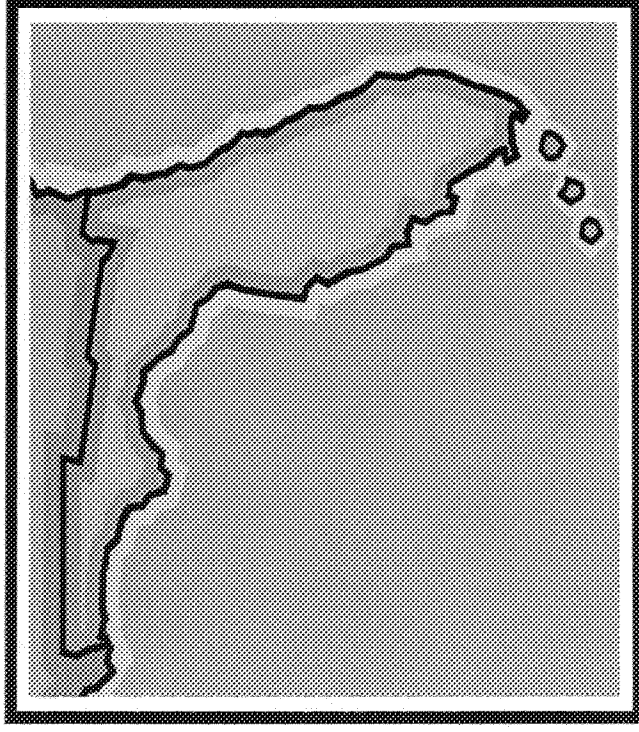
- Florida Workforce Boards serving:
  - Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River, Okeechobee
  - Palm Beach
  - Miami / Dade
  - Brevard
  - Sarasota
  - Manatee

Nationwide
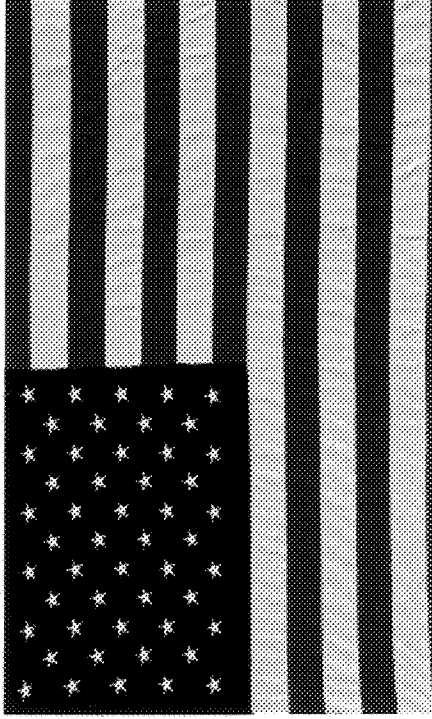
- Illinois
  - 3 workforce boards serving 32 counties
  - Soon = Chicago
- Texas / 9 Counties
- Massachusetts
  - New Bedford Workforce Board
  - Massachusetts Voc Training Centers

High School Reform

- Goal 2 - Increase the % of HS graduates
  - Make senior year relevant
  - Increase relevance
- Goal 3 - Increase % of graduates who begin their PS path to college or career
  - Industry certifications
  - Revise technical / career curriculum based on community needs
  - Expand school / business relationships

Why?

Graduation+ 10 yrs follow-up data shows:

– 38.2% earned any credential beyond HS diploma

– 14.4% earned baccalaureate degree

61.8% with nothing more than their HS diploma

Let's all work together......

- Students need:
  - Academic / Technical / Work Readiness skills
  - Credentials that document their achievements

- Employers need:
  - Quality employees who are "work ready"

- School Districts need:
  - Flexibility to use tools / processes / programs
  - Support from the Florida Legislature and DOE
  - Quality CTE and Work Readiness in High School Reform

Are you certifiable????

Work Certified™

Tab 4
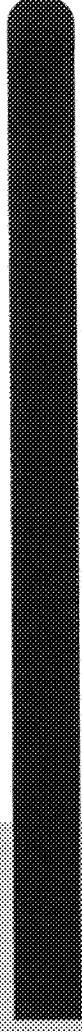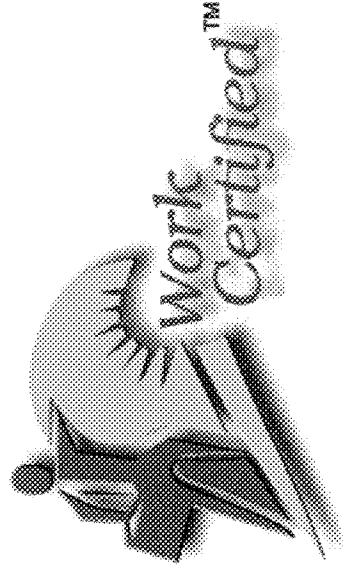
MATERIALS NOT PROVIDED TO THE COMMITTEE

Hi-TEC

Hillsborough Technical Education Centers

Aparicio-Levy * Brewster * Erwin * Learey * Tampa Bay

WORKFORCE READINESS

Hillsborough County
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Excellence in Education
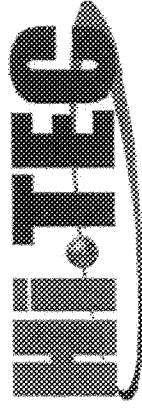
Technical Resource Centers

Workplace Readiness Skills

Career Assessment & Planning

Computer Literacy

Technical Math & Writing

ESOL

GED Prep

Additional Academic Support

HI•TEC

Hillsborough County
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Excellence in Education
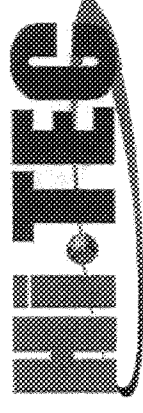
Workforce Orientation

Graduate & Employer Testimonies

Successful Training

- Diversity and Sexual Harrassment Awareness
- Time and Stress Management
- Learning Styles
- Study Skills & Test-taking Strategies

Successful Employment

- Getting & Keeping a Job
- Entrepreneurship
- Staying Competitive in the Workplace

Hillsborough County
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Excellence in Education

HI·TEC
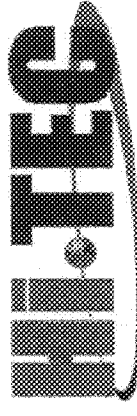
Technical Program Integration
(English & Spanish)

- D.O.E. Curriculum Frameworks

  – Job Search Techniques

  – Employment Applications

  – Resume / Portfolio Construction

  – Interview Skills (video → job fairs)

  – Human Relations & Interpersonal Skills

    • Accepting constructive criticism, conflict resolution, responsibility, dependability, ethics, initiative, professionalism, etc.

Hi·TEC

Hillsborough County
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Excellence in Education
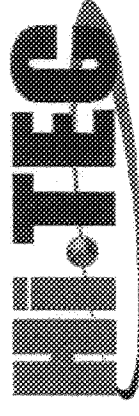
Off-Campus Industry Partnerships
On-Site Training & Coached Employment

Certified Nursing Assistant

– 22 Assisted Living Facilities or Nursing Homes

Hospitality & Lodging Operations (Housekeeping, Laundry, Food Service, Front Desk)

– Hillsborough County Jail (near-release inmates)

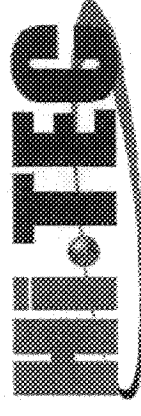– Holiday Inn, Ashley Plaza Hotel, Florida Aquarium

Supportive Competitive Employment for Adults with Disabilities

– Macy's at West Shore & Citrus Park Towne Center

HI•TEC

Hillsborough County
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Excellence in Education

Florida Department of Education
CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Program Title: Workplace Readiness Skills (VPI)
Program Type: Adult General Education
Occupational Area: Instructional Support Services
Components: N/A

Program Numbers   9900070
CIP Number   1532.010501
Grade Level   30, 31
Length   Variable, non-credit
Certification: ANY FIELD WHEN CERT REFLECTS BACHELOR OR HIGHER
                     G WITH BACHELOR/HIGHER DEGREE

I.   **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this program is to prepare students for the
      workplace. This program strives to inspire and motivate students to
      become productive, self-sufficient members of society. It provides:

      1.   Career assessment designed to assist persons with special needs in
            identifying vocational interests, temperament, aptitudes and
            learning styles.

      2.   Workplace readiness skills, which include, but are not limited to:
            interview techniques, resume writing, workplace behaviors, job
            acquisition and job retention.

      3.   Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)
            competency training.

II.   **PROGRAM STRUCTURE:** Program procedures encompass the following:

      1.   Behaviors that make the student more employable and ready to enter
            the workforce.

III. **SPECIAL NOTE:** This program is non-graded.

      SCANS Competencies: Instructional strategies for this program must
      include methods that require students to identify, organize, and use
      resources appropriately; to work with each other cooperatively and
      productively; to acquire and use information; to understand social,
      organizational, and technological systems; and to work with a variety of
      tools and equipment. Instructional strategies must also incorporate the
      methods to improve students' personal qualities and high-order thinking
      skills.

IV.   **INTENDED OUTCOMES:** After successfully completing this course, the
      student will be able to perform the following:

      01.0 Identify vocational interest and aptitude in making career
            choices.
      02.0 Demonstrate job acquisition and job retention skills.
      03.0 Apply SCANS competencies.

Florida Department of Education
STUDENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Occupational Area: Instructional Support Services
Program Title: Workplace Readiness Skills (VPI)
Postsecondary Number: 9900070
CIP Number: 1532.010501

Literacy Completion Point A

CAREER ASSESSMENT

01.0 <u>IDENTIFY VOCATIONAL INTEREST AND APTITUDE IN MAKING CAREER
     CHOICES</u>--The student will be able to:

     01.01 Assess his/her learning style.
     01.02 Assess his/her occupational interests and aptitudes.
     01.03 Relate individual interests to specific occupational areas.
     01.04 Explore occupational careers and goals in various clusters.
     01.05 Establish educational and career goals.

WORKPLACE READINESS SKILLS

02.0 <u>DEMONSTRATE ACCEPTABLE JOB ACQUISITION/JOB RETENTION SKILLS</u>--The
     instruction in workforce readiness skills is based on individual need
     and may include, but is not limited to the following. The student will
     be able to:

     02.01 Prepare a personal data sheet.
     02.02 Prepare a resume.
     02.03 Identify job announcement sources.
     02.04 Prepare a cover letter.
     02.05 Demonstrate the ability to correctly complete an employment
           application.
     02.06 Demonstrate appropriate interviewing techniques.
     02.07 Prepare for applicable employment tests.
     02.08 Demonstrate the ability to complete work-related documents.
     02.09 Demonstrate an understanding of appropriate job behaviors.
     02.10 Interpret company policies and procedures.
     02.11 Demonstrate knowledge of resignation procedures.

SCANS COMPETENCIES

03.0 <u>DEMONSTRATE ACCEPTABLE SCANS BEHAVIORS</u> -- The instruction in workforce
     readiness skills is based on individual need and may include, but is not
     limited to the following. The student will be able to:

     03.01 Identify, organize and use resources appropriately.
     03.02 Work with each other cooperatively and productively.
     03.03 Acquire and use information.
     03.04 Understand social, organizational and technological systems.
     03.05 Work with a variety of tools and equipment.

SDHC
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

directions to centers

Hillsborough Technical Education Centers

Aparicio-Levy Technical Center
10119 East Ellicott Street
Tampa, FL 33610
813.740.4884

Between Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd and Highway 92, one block east of Faulkenburg
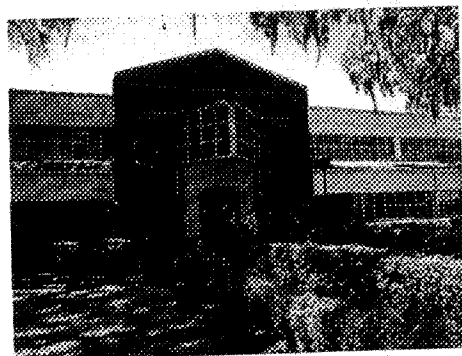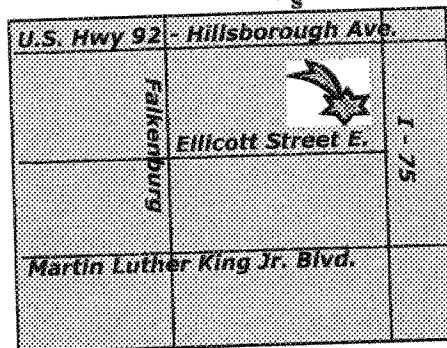
Brewster Technical Center
2222 North Tampa Street
Tampa, FL 33610
813.276.5464

North of Palm Avenue at the intersection of Tampa Street and Palm
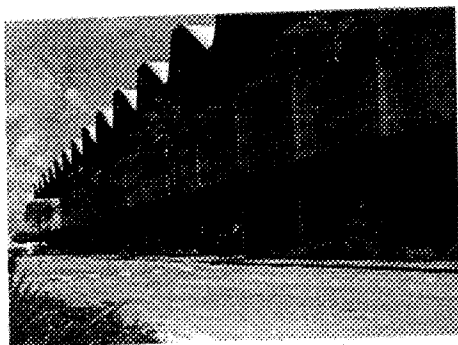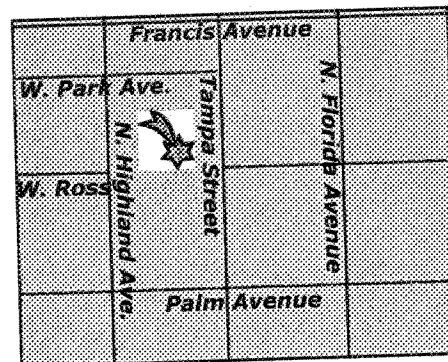
Erwin Technical Center
2010 East Hillsborough Ave.
Tampa, FL 33610
813.231.1815

On the northwest corner of the Hillsborough and 22nd Street intersection
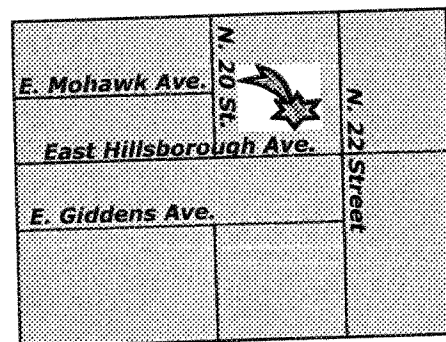
Learey Technical Center
5410 North 20th Street
Tampa, FL 33610
813.231.1907

Two blocks west of the Hillsborough and 22nd Street intersection facing 20th Street
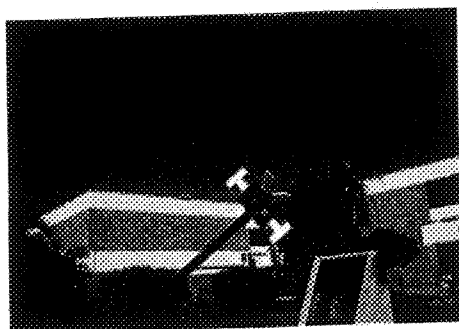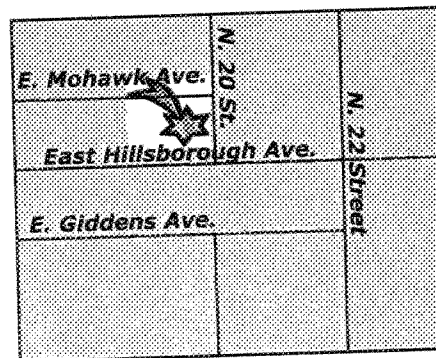
Tampa Bay Tech Evening School
6410 Orient Road
Tampa, FL 33610
813.744.8360 Ext 235

School faces Orient Road; east of Harney, west of Orient, and south of Sligh
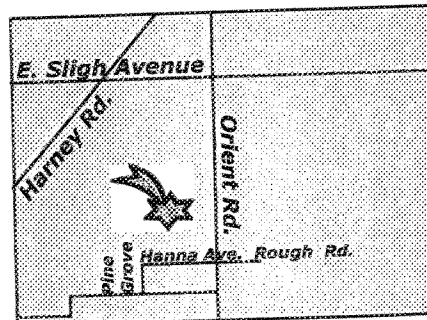
Professional Employment Portfolios

The only rule about portfolios is to make your portfolio work for you and for the position you're seeking. Include only information relevant to the position you are seeking and to what the company is looking for in a new hire.

A professional employment portfolio could be just the thing that sets you apart from other job candidates. Your portfolio is a window on your learning and accomplishments, enabling employers to see a view of your accomplishments, supported by samples of your work. Your portfolio is an effective device for communicating your skills.

A well-prepared portfolio

- Illustrates your achievements,
- Demonstrates your skills and abilities and
- Provides documentation to prospective employers.
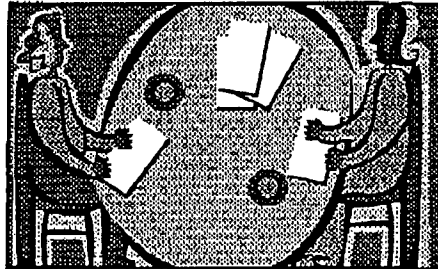
Organizing Your Portfolio

- Target the skills necessary for the job you will be interviewing for and showcase them.
- Choose items that will document how you have used those skills for the employer.
- Use a professional looking portfolio notebook. that you can add pages to.
- Use plastic page covers to protect your materials and to make rearranging your portfolio easy.
- Arrange your portfolio to show how your abilities relate to the employer's needs.
- Label the different sections for ease of finding information in the portfolio.

What to Include

- A copy of your résumé
- References
- An copy (official copies are preferred) of high school diploma/GED, transcripts, certificates of any training that you have received that relates to the position
- Certificates of awards and honors; special certifications for special training
- A list of conferences and workshops you have attended and a description of each
- Documentation of technical or computer skills, such as PowerPoint Presentations or Excel Worksheets you developed
- Letters of recommendation
- Letters of commendation or thanks
- Samples of your writing
- Letters of nomination to honors and academic organizations
- A program from an event you planned or in which you participated that would show organization skills
- Newspaper articles that address some achievement
- Volunteer, internship or co-op summary report/letter

Electronic Portfolios

In addition to your traditional portfolio, you may want to create an electronic portfolio. You can make the electronic portfolio available to employers as a supplement to your résumé. It can be on a floppy disk, CD-ROM, or the World Wide Web. You can set it up as a PowerPoint presentation or include a PowerPoint slideshow as part of your electronic portfolio. You would need electronic equipment that would scan and copy materials.

Electronic portfolios are easy for employers to access and use, especially if they're on the web. It would be necessary to have an Internet service where you can have your own web page. By including a "mailto" link in your portfolio, employers can contact you easily simply by clicking on the link and typing in a message for you. Another benefit of having an electronic portfolio is that it shows employers that you are familiar with various types of computer technology and programs.

Before creating your electronic portfolio, create your traditional version. Include electronic versions of items from your traditional portfolio. It could include an expanded version of your résumé. For example, include the word processing files for your writing samples

and your résumé, scans of appropriate photos and certificates, and Adobe Acrobat (pdf) files of graphics such as brochures that you have designed. In addition to the kinds of materials in your traditional portfolio, you might include an, audio and video clips, an e-mail link, a link to the school and the curriculum for your major, and other appropriate links. Avoid personal information and inappropriate links—anywhere on your web site.

Remember that anyone with much web experience can explore more of your web pages quite easily beyond your portfolio if it's online. You might want to put your online portfolio on a different server to prevent this kind of browsing by employers. Keep the web page current and relevant.

Using Your Portfolio

You may want to mention in your résumé as well as in your cover letter that your portfolio is available upon request. Always bring your portfolio to interviews. When the employer begins to ask questions about your résumé, you can use your portfolio to support your responses. For example, the employer might say, "I see that you know PowerPoint. How have you used this program? You might reply, "In my class at the Customer Service Academy, I developed PowerPoint presentations. Here is a copy of the notes page for a presentation I made on finding job leads."

Never leave your original materials with an employer. Have copies of the materials organized and stapled to leave with them. If you do not have copies available, offer to let the employer make copies before you leave or offer to send copies of the materials as a follow-up to the interview.

You need to continue to update and add information to your portfolio. Weekly check on its appearance and update as necessary. After you are employed, add to it for internal interviews for promotions and for future job searches. Save copies of materials you have received in your new position. Include anything that you think might help you in a promotion or a future job search.
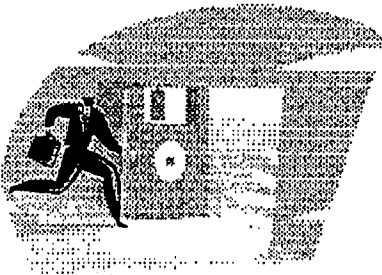
A strong portfolio opens doors, a weak portfolio closes them.

Tab 6

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Tab 7

Awaiting Presentation Materials

State Strategies for Redesigning High Schools and Promoting High School to College Transitions

Education Commission of the States

By Jane Armstrong
January 2005
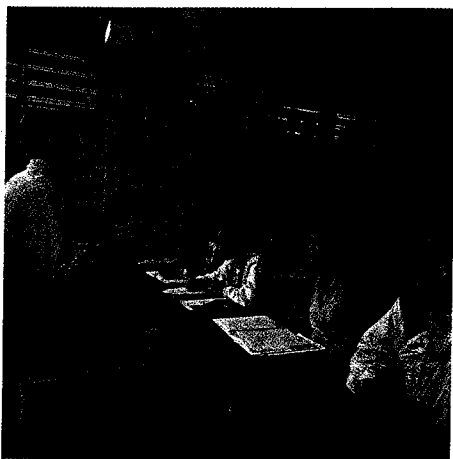
Experts are now calling for all students to have a minimum of a solid high school education and two years of postsecondary education, if they are to be successful in a workforce requiring more advanced skills.

Introduction

This issue brief focuses on what increasingly are seen as the major stumbling blocks that students face in high school and in enrolling in postsecondary education. It summarizes recommendations from several national reports and conference proceedings on how high schools should be redesigned and how the transition to postsecondary education can be made more seamless for students. This brief also provides several examples of what state leaders are doing to deal with these issues and some sources for additional information.

Workforce Readiness

Business leaders, educators – now policymakers – are insisting that students leave school with the skills needed to be successful in today's knowledge-based economy. The stakes are high. America's competitive edge in the global economy, the strength and versatility of its labor force, its capacity to nourish research and innovation increasingly depend on an education system capable of producing a steady supply of well-prepared young people.

According to a new RAND report, *The 21st Century at Work*, rapid technological change and increased international competition place the spotlight on the skills and preparation of the workforce, particularly the ability to adapt to changing technologies and shifting product demand. The growing importance of knowledge-based work favors workers with the skills of abstract reasoning, problem solving, communication and collaboration. Knowledge workers will need high-level skills for managing, interpreting, validating, transforming,

communicating and acting on information.[1]

The fastest-growing jobs will require some education beyond high school. Jobs requiring a bachelor's degree will grow by 32%, and jobs requiring a master's degree will grow by 23%.[2] Jobs that require more education also pay better. For 2000, the average annual salary for workers ages 25 and older without a high school degree was $21,400, for high school graduates it was $28,800, jumping to $46,300 a year for workers with a bachelor's degree.[3]

Experts are now calling for all students to have a minimum of a solid high school education and two years of postsecondary education, if they are to be successful in a workforce requiring more advanced skills.

But this is easier said than done. A number of studies and recent reports indicate too many high school students graduate without the skills or coursework needed to succeed in college. Without a strong college-prep curriculum, students have difficulty navigating the transition to postsecondary education.

Some statistics tell the story. Nearly all high school students aspire to attend college (97%), yet just 60% have the minimum credits required for admission. Yet of the 63% of high school students who do make it to college, more than a quarter of these students must take remedial coursework.[4] Although more students today begin college than 20 years ago, greater proportions are not graduating. Obviously, the pipeline has troubling gaps, disconnects and weaknesses.

How Well Are High Schools Educating Students?

The first stumbling block is many high schools are not doing a good job in educating – and graduating – all their students.

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), student achievement gains in high school are uneven or have leveled off:[5]

- Since 1992, the average science scores of 17-year-olds have remained essentially unchanged.
- Reading scores for 17-year-olds were slightly lower between 1986 and 1999.
- Achievement gaps were largely unchanged in the past 10 years.

A new ACT report, *Crisis at the Core*, reports that average composite ACT scores — a measure of high school preparation — have remained the same or declined during the past five years.[6] Just 22% of ACT-tested high school graduates meet all three of ACT's College Readiness Benchmarks. These benchmarks represent the level of achievement required for students to have a high probability of success in college biology, algebra and English composition.

According to a recent report from the American Diploma Project, for too many graduates, a high school diploma does not represent adequate preparation for the intellectual demands of college or work; it is merely a certificate of attendance. The project identified these problems with high schools and/or their graduates:

- Most high school graduates need remedial help in college.
- Most college students never attain a degree.
- Most employers say high school graduates lack basic skills.

- Too few high school students take challenging courses.
- Most high school exit exams do not measure what matters to colleges and employers.[7]

Problems also exist in the pipeline from high school to college. For every 100 students who enter 9th grade, only 67 graduate from high school, 38 enroll in college, 26 are still enrolled in college after their sophomore year, and only 18 graduate with either an associate's or baccalaureate degree within *six* years of graduating from high school.[8] The numbers are even worse for low-income students and for African American and Hispanic Americans, the fastest-growing proportion of the youth cohort. Only 18% of African Americans and 9% of Hispanics have earned a bachelor's degree.[9] The only way to increase the number of students who complete postsecondary education is to improve the pipeline linking high school, postsecondary and "second-chance" education systems.

For every 100 students who enter 9th grade, only 67 graduate from high school, 38 enroll in college, 26 are still enrolled in college after their sophomore year, and only 18 graduate with either an associate's or baccalaureate degree within six years of graduating from high school.

Education Commission of the States
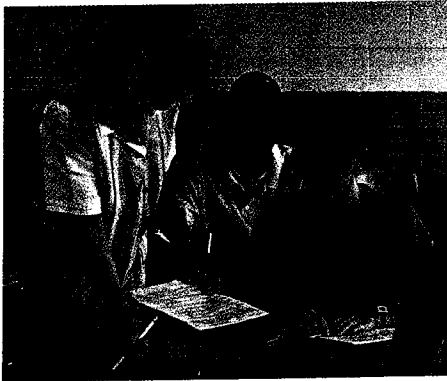
What State Education Leaders Can Do

These issues clearly are getting attention. The U.S. Department of Education is sponsoring an initiative called Preparing America's Future High School. The next governors' education summit in February 2005 will focus on high school reform. These actions are coupled with a number of reports[10] that make recommendations for reforming high schools and aligning the education system to make the transition to college more seamless for students. A synthesis of key recommendations for policymaker attention includes the following:

Supporting High School Innovation
- Provide a venture capital fund for districts to develop new types of high schools and new high school courses. Districts could apply for start-up funds to design and organize new high school models.
- Create small high schools in grades 9-12.
- Use school choice or charter schools to create more effective high schools.

Strengthening the High School Curriculum
- Align high school academic standards – and exit standards – with the knowledge and skills required for college and workplace success.
- Require all students to take a college-prep curriculum (four years of English, three years of math, three years of natural science, three years of social studies and two years of a second language). Ensure there are quality teachers to teach these courses.
- Provide flexibility to districts to link students' educational progression to their academic performance rather than just to the courses they've taken.

State education leaders then can look at policies and programs that help bridge

students' transition from high school to postsecondary education. For example:

Increasing Accountability for Student Performance
- Administer end-of-course exams and require a passing score to receive credit toward graduation.
- Use high school graduation exams to ensure students meet standards to receive a high school diploma.
- Develop and fund statewide remedial programs to help students pass high school exit exams.
- Test every student at least once in grades 10-12 in reading/language arts, mathematics and science as required by the No Child Left Behind Act. Include graduation rates as a second indicator and report annual results on adequate yearly progress for schools and districts.
- Use performance measures to assess students' work and post-secondary-related skills.
- Award advanced high school diplomas to students who complete additional coursework, achieve high test scores or graduate with a specified gradepoint average.
- Provide incentives to reduce the number of dropouts.
- Ask colleges to collect and report evidence of school and district performance based on success of their students.
- Hold postsecondary institutions accountable for students receiving a degree.

Bridging the Gap Between High School and Postsecondary Education
- Use high school assessments for college admissions, placement and/or the awarding of scholarships. This means higher education leaders need to agree on a common definition of the skills

students need to begin credit-bearing courses.
- Enact dual-enrollment programs so high school students can earn college credit, either by enrolling in college-endorsed classes taught by their high school teachers or by taking those classes on college campuses or though a distance-learning provider.
- Expand Advanced Placement or other high-quality college-level programs in high schools.
- Create middle-college programs where students who complete a core high school curriculum by age 16 can attend two years of high school on a college campus.
- Develop financial and other incentives that will reward high schools and postsecondary institutions for students' successful progression to and through college.
- Create data systems that hold both high schools and postsecondary institutions accountable for how well they help students achieve a postsecondary credential by age 26.
- Create a P-16 council to analyze data, align policies and put programs in place to ensure academic success at every grade.

Building the Capacity of High Schools To Teach All Students to Higher Standards
- Create incentives for successful teachers to share their knowledge and skills at increasing student achievement with at-risk students.
- Develop programs for higher education faculty to deliver content-rich renewal courses or institutes for teachers.
- Ensure opportunities for high school leaders to learn from the successes of others who have developed successful high school programs.

What States Are Doing

State leaders already are taking action. Many states are out in front of this issue and have implemented many of the above policy recommendations. To provide ideas and policy options to state education leaders, short examples follow.

Supporting High School Innovation

- Under Governor Mark Warner's Senior Year Plus initiative, a Virtual Advanced Placement (AP) School will provide **Virginia** high school students with access to a broader range of AP courses via existing distance-learning networks, regardless of where the students live. An Electronic Bulletin Board will show how any student can earn college credits while in high school, through Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual enrollment and other options. A statewide coordinator, "virtual" counselors, and school-based career guidance and academic advising software will support the Senior Year Plus initiative.

- **Florida** has passed legislation that limits the total number of students in elementary, middle and high schools "to reduce anonymity of students in large schools." Schools that exceed these numbers are required to subdivide schools into "schools-within-a-school." These schools are encouraged to use flexible scheduling, team planning, and curricular and instructional innovation to organize groups of students with groups of teachers to make smaller units.

- **California** has reduced the local matching fund requirement to 40% of project costs on a pilot-program basis for the construction of high schools meeting certain criteria. This legislation also provides additional modernization funds for larger high schools to reconfigure into two or more smaller schools.

Strengthening the High School Curriculum

- Through its Advanced Placement Incentive Program, **Oklahoma** awards grants to school districts that support AP and/or International Baccalaureate courses though "vertical teams." Vertical teams are composed of high school and college faculty and are expected to improve the articulation between high school and postsecondary education.

- **California** has developed a model curriculum framework for implementation of career and technical education courses that meet state-adopted standards, as well as satisfying high school graduation and college admissions requirements.

- **Indiana** has created a Web-based career planning tool for high school students. Students start by identifying a specific career, career focus area or career cluster. When a career is selected, the high school course sequence for grades 9-12 is identified for each student. The state is revising the content of its graduation exam and its Core 40 end-of-course assessments to reflect the knowledge and skills needed for success in postsecondary education or employment after high school.

Increasing Accountability for Student Performance

- **Oklahoma** has passed a bill that adds "attainment of competencies" as a method of satisfying high school-core course requirements. Proficiency is demonstrated through testing (or some other means) as an alternative to seat time.

- **Arkansas** requires postsecondary education institutions to report on high school students' readiness for higher education. The state requires schools and districts to develop strategies to improve student readiness for postsecondary education and reduce the remediation high school graduates need.

Bridging the Gap Between High School and Postsecondary Education

- **New Mexico** requires next-step plans for high school students in which the students set personal post-graduation goals. The law requires a final next-step plan as a prerequisite for graduation.

- **Texas** has established the Middle College Education Program to serve students who are at risk of dropping out of high school or who wish to complete high school at an accelerated pace.

- **North Carolina** has established Innovative Education Initiatives to develop cooperative efforts between secondary schools and institutions of higher education. The goals are to reduce dropout rates, increase high school and college graduation rates, and decrease the need for remedial programs in higher education. In addition, North Carolina encourages early entry of motivated students into four-year college programs.

- **California** recently has established a program to assist community college students who want to earn baccalaureate degrees at a California State University campus. The chancellor of the system is to establish lower-division transfer requirements for each high-demand baccalaureate program.

- **Washington** now requires the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the superintendent of public instruction and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to convene a work group to discuss standards and expectations for the knowledge and skills high school graduates need for college-level work and strategies

for communicating those standards to all Washington high schools.

Building the Capacity of High Schools To Teach All Students to Higher Standards

- **North Carolina** has established a Teacher Academy that employs teachers to assist in developing and delivering high-quality professional development to other teachers during the summer. Additional follow-up with teachers during the school year helps assure implementation of knowledge and skills gained in the summer programs.

- For many years, **Connecticut** has extended professional development training to teachers using university faculty to deliver specialized content, especially in the sciences and mathematics.

- **Virginia** Governor Mark R. Warner has initiated the Virginia Turnaround Specialist Program that will prepare school principals, through an executive education program at the University of Virginia, to turn around consistently low-performing and hard-to-staff schools.

Resources and Additional Information

For a recent report card on state higher education systems, see the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education's *Measuring Up 2004: The State-by-State Report Card for Higher Education* at http://measuringup.highereducation.org

The American Diploma Project has developed English and mathematics benchmarks that high school graduates should have, along with an action agenda. These are described in *Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts*, available at http://www.achieve.org/achieve.nsf/AmericanDiplomaProject?openform

ACT has released a new report, *Crisis at the Core: Preparing All Students for College and Work* that describes how well high school students are prepared to succeed in college. The report is available at http://www.act.org/path/policy/pdf/crisis_report.pdf

To learn more about how to make the senior year more meaningful, see the National Commission on the High School Senior Year report, *The Lost Opportunity of Senior Year: Finding a Better Way* at http://www.woodrow.org/CommissionOnTheSeniorYear/Senior_Year_Report_Final.pdf

To learn more how states and regions develop more aligned and equitable policies that help students prepare for and succeed in some form of postsecondary education, see the Bridge Project's report, *Betraying the College Dream*, at http://www.stanford.edu/group/bridgeproject/

To learn more about the Jobs for the Future project on *Redesigning High Schools: The Unfinished Agenda in State Education Reform*, go to http://www.jff.org/jff/approaches/a_youthtrans.html

The Education Trust has a number of reports documenting student achievement gains and the need for a stronger high school curriculum. *A New Core Curriculum for All: Aiming High for Other People's Children* is available at http://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust/Product+Catalog/Reports+and+Publications.htm

To learn more about the U.S. Department of Education's *Preparing America's Future High School Initiative*, visit http://www.ed.gov/highschool

To learn more about state policies and programs related to high school reform, go to http://www.ecs.org/highschool

Jane Armstrong is an ECS senior policy advisor.

Endnotes

[1] Lynn Karoly and Constantijn Panis. *The 21st Century at Work*. RAND, 2004.

[2] Bureau of the Census. *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, Winter 2001-02.

[3] Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, Spring 2002.

[4] National Center for Education Statistics. *The Condition of Education, 2000*. Also, see the National Center for Education Statistics, *Remedial*

Education at Degree Granting Post-Secondary Institutions in Fall 2000, 2001.

[5] National Center for Education Statistics. *NAEP 1999 Trends in Academic Progress: Three Decades of Student Performance*, 2002.

[6] ACT. *Crisis at the Core: Preparing All Students for College and Work*, 2004.

[7] American Diploma Project. *Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts*, 2004.

[8] Peter T. Ewell, Dennis M. Jones and Patrick J. Kelly. *Conceptualizing and Researching the Education Pipeline*. National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2003.

[9] National Center for Higher Education Management Systems. *Racial and Ethnic Representation from High School to College Completion, by State*, 2000.

[10] See the reports included in the resources section of this issue brief.

Education Commission of the States
700 Broadway, Suite 1200
Denver, CO 80203-3460

Education Commission
of the States

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Denver, Colorado
Permit No. 153

FEATURE STORY - August, 2005

Ready ... Not

Today's entry-level applicants are so lacking in basic skills, a new credentialing test has been devised to ensure employers aren't left holding the remedial bag.

BY ELAYNE ROBERTSON DEMBY

Marcia Vian, director of human resources for Hilton Hotels Corp.'s Doubletree Hotel in Bellevue, Wash., recently interviewed a candidate for a front-desk agent position. However, when she asked the American-born, high-school graduate with some college to define "customer service," he responded, "Customer service is, you know, customer service, it's like, you know, customer service." Vian then asked for an example of when he had provided excellent customer service and the response was "Well, um, I know I have."

The candidate's inability to articulate an answer was important. Front-desk agents have to have good communications skills, says Vian. "[They] are a pivotal point of contact for guests," she says.

Vian's experience was far from atypical. Entry-level workers often lack skills to do their jobs properly or advance up the corporate ladder. Applicants, says Vian, now often do not meet the minimum requirements needed to resolve guest issues. "If a person is not able to comprehend and determine a guest's needs, and can't problem-solve, then you could lose the guest," she says. Concern is building over the quality of the workforce, says Dana Egreczky, vice president for workforce development at the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce. In 15 years, there will be 12 million to 14 million unfilled jobs nationwide because there will not be enough qualified workers to fill them, she says, citing data from Boston-based Jobs for the Future, an employment-promotion partnership, and economist Anthony Carnevally.

The problem is not about numbers, but quality. Entry-level employees often lack "soft skills," says Karen Elzey, a senior program officer at the Center for Workforce Preparation at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington. Interpersonal skills, in particular, are problematic. Young people now often have advanced computer skills, but do not know how to work with people face-to-face, and also do not know how to get along with other workers, says Kyle Adamonis, senior vice president of human resources and legal at Taco Inc., a manufacturer of heating and cooling products for the HVAC industry located in Cranston, R.I. Knowing how to learn the job is also a skill that newer workers have trouble with, says Sondra Stein, a senior consultant and project manager for the Work Readiness Credential at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Center for Workforce Preparation, also in Washington.

Knowledge of the English language has also become an issue. Even when young workers are American, born and raised, they often are unable to convey ideas to supervisors or give or take information over the telephone. Many of the younger people, Adamonis says, now communicate via the computer, cell phone or e-mail in what she terms "e-mail language."

"But in business," she says, "you have to communicate in the English language."
To help human resource professionals ferret out the wheat from the chaff, a business-backed coalition led by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is developing a work-readiness credentialing test to determine which workers are ready to enter the workforce and which need further training.

A Better Measure
To be sure, the need is there. Neither a high-school diploma nor a GED is a good, meaningful tool for assessing the work-readiness skills of entry-level candidates, says Kip Bergstrom, an executive director for the Rhode Island Economic Policy Council in Providence, R.I. A high-school diploma does not mean that a worker has any proficiency in math, reading or social relationships, says Egreczky. For example, she says, the average automotive-technology manual is written at a junior-in-college reading level, so a high-school graduate who reads at a sixth-grade level cannot comprehend that manual—obviously, a crucial skill if working in an automotive repair shop.

And because the issues go beyond just reading and math, federal and state programs aimed at raising the level of high-school graduates' proficiency in reading and math have not helped nearly enough. "More and more, you see standards in schools to raise reading and math skills, but there are no similar investments in raising interpersonal communications and social skills," says Stein. The problem is that schools produce graduates with book knowledge who have no idea how to apply that knowledge in real-life work situations, says Bergstrom.

Furthermore, Adamonis points out, high-school graduates are also not trained in industry-specific skills. For exmple, Taco needs machine operators and welders with blueprint-reading skills or numerically controlled computer programming skills.

The test is being developed by a partnership between the private sector and the public workforce-investment system. Funding for the project is coming from the U.S. Department of Labor as well as from the states of New Jersey, New York, Florida, Washington, Rhode Island and the District of Columbia.

The credential will test how well a person does in math, how they relate to language and how they make decisions based on certain conditions. It's expected to be ready for use in the spring of 2006. The initial launch will be in the states that have invested in it as well as the District of Columbia. The goal is that it will be recognized throughout the country.
"It will be a new national credential," says Stein. "Like a high-school diploma, this will be an additional certificate of skills attainment which will be proof that people are work-ready or ready to undertake higher education." It will not be a requirement for graduation, however.

The new assessment is being developed to use on multiple populations, including young workers and potential candidates, individuals coming from the Labor Department's one-stop career centers (training centers located throughout the country that provide job seekers with career

guidance and employers with sources of potential recruits), dislocated workers, workers who have been out of the workforce for a period of time and immigrants. It was based on standards developed by Equipped for the Future, an initiative of the National Institute for Literacy, says Elzey. In developing the test, the first step was to identify the skills new workers need for critical entry-level jobs.

According to Stein, a three-stage process was conducted. First, there was an online survey in which front-line supervisors and human resource professionals were asked to rate entry-level tasks according to which ones were most important for entry-level work. They were also asked which skills were most important for enabling entry-level workers to carry out those tasks.

That survey was conducted in the four states that were partners in the credential: Florida, Washington, New York and New Jersey. The second step was to take the rated tasks and skills of the first survey and get feedback from other supervisors and front-line workers to see if they agreed. Then, the U.S. Chamber sent out the rated skills and tasks to get feedback across the country. The skills determined necessary for entry-level workers, to be used in the assessment, are: 1) both oral and reading communications skills, 2) interpersonal skills including cooperation and conflict resolution, 3) problem-solving skills, 4) math skills and 5) learning skills.

The test will be Web-based on a secure server that will be offered through employment agencies, community colleges and perhaps some high schools.

Employers could even offer it as well, says Stein, although she believes most will refer candidates to centers where they can take the test. "Basically," she says, "employers will say, 'Here's where you can take the assessment; if you pass, then we'll be interested.' "

The exam is scheduled to undergo field tests starting in September 2005 and ending in December 2005. One of the issues to be addressed in the field is a determination as to what the cutoff level for passing the exam will be. Although the cutoff point has yet to be established, potential employees taking the credential would receive either a pass or fail grade. Candidates who fail to pass will not necessarily be unemployable in the long term. The exam will also be used to determine what education candidates need to become effective entry-level workers, says Elzey. For example, if it's given in one of the one-stop career centers and someone does not make the grade, the career center could then direct the job seeker to appropriate remediation to get the required skills.

"If someone doesn't pass, [he or she can still] build the skills needed to be work-ready," says Stein.

Great Expectations
The hope, says Vian, is that the credentialing test will help human resource professionals identify people who have the aptitude to learn and the right attitude to work with people. "We're looking for a process that demonstrates they are ready and prepared to work," she says, the end-result being that the organization can save on recruitment and training costs and improve the opportunities for advancement.

And, while the focus of the credentialing is on entry-level workers, some employers are eyeing it as a panacea to filling positions higher up. At LifeSpan, a Providence, R.I., health system that

owns and manages five hospitals in Rhode Island, workforce shortages are in upper-level positions, not entry-level positions, because the organization has superior pay and benefits for entry-level workers, says Brandon Melton, senior vice president of human resources. Lifespan's vacancy rates in nursing and allied health positions, however, are 10 percent to 35 percent because these positions require more skills and education, and because the training programs are small and require at least a two-year associate's degree.

LifeSpan views the work-readiness credential as an important first step in getting employees ready to learn the skills to move into managerial or technical positions. Good communications, math, computer knowledge and learning skills are the first rung in the ladder, says Melton. "We want to move as many of our entry-level employees as possible [into these higher positions]," says Melton. For instance, LifeSpan has an in-house radiology technician training program and provides employees with benefits for other training programs as well.

However, Adamonis has some doubts about the ability of a one-size-fits-all approach.
"This attempt at credentialing is a good first step, but it will probably need further refinement to individualize it for a particular industry," she says. For example, she adds, the skill set that an entry-level worker needs in the medical-service profession is vastly different then those needed in manufacturing.

Furthermore, says Adamonis, nothing will probably ever take the place of real-life work experience. "I don't think schools will ever be able to take actual on-the-job experience and teach that to children," says Adamonis. To that end, Taco set up its in-house worker training center in 1992. At the time, the company wanted to retrain long-term employees in new manufacturing techniques and skills. "We wanted to both retrain current employees and continually elevate their skills," she says.
Eventually, the center's programs grew to include helping entry-level workers develop needed skills, such as teaching workers English as a Second Language.
"We need to understand that applicants are going to come and we have to take the responsibility to train them," Adamonis says.

The Work Readiness Credential:
A Tool to Assess Critical Entry-Level Skills

What is the Value to Employers?

National and state leaders in business, government, and labor have come together to build a national Work Readiness Credential (WRC) based on a business-defined standard of the critical skills needed by entry-level workers. Employers using the credential will reduce recruitment costs, improve productivity, minimize turnover, and lower on-the-job training costs by being able to confidently hire entry-level workers who can:

- Complete work accurately, on time, and to a high standard of quality.
- Work in teams to achieve mutual goals and objectives.
- Follow work-related rules and regulations.
- Demonstrate willingness to work and show initiative.
- Display responsible behaviors at work, including avoiding absenteeism and demonstrating promptness.

What is the Work Readiness Credential?

- A certification of work readiness based on a computer-delivered and legally defensible assessment.
- Includes four modules within the assessment which can be completed separately or all together. Total time: 2 ½ hours.
- A foundation for industry-specific certifications.
- The first national standards-based assessment for entry-level workers to provide a universal, transferable, national standard for work readiness.

The WRC is based on the nationally validated Equipped for the Future (EFF) applied learning standards, created as part of the National Institute for Literacy's ten year standards-development initiative. SRI International, an independent, not-for-profit, science- and knowledge-based research and consulting organization, leads a team of research and development organizations in designing the WRC.

Which Skills are Assessed?

Businesses from across industry sectors identified these skills as critical for entry-level workers to succeed in today's workplace and global economy:

- Speak so others can understand
- Solve problems and make decisions
- Read with understanding
- Cooperate with others
- Resolve conflicts and negotiate

- Use math to solve problems
- Observe critically
- Listen actively
- Take responsibility for learning

The WRC is scheduled for release spring 2006

How Will it Benefit my Business?

- Reduced applicant screening time
- Reduced employee turnover due to better hiring practices
- Reduced training and supervision costs
- Increased standards of employee performance
- Increased productivity and profits
- Recognition of your business as a national champion for the credential in your industry or community

How Will it Help Job Seekers?

The WRC enables job seekers to demonstrate to prospective employers that they have the knowledge and skills needed for successful performance as entry-level workers. The WRC is not intended to replace academics, high school, or postsecondary education. Instead, it addresses the ability to perform basic entry-level tasks. Entry-level workers benefit from the WRC because the credential:

- Is the first step on a career path.
- Helps entry-level workers identify the skills they need to strengthen to carry out entry-level tasks successfully.
- Provides entry-level workers with the skills they need to actively pursue advancement in the workplace.

How Can I Get Involved?

- Sign up to be a field test site
- Be the first to sign on to be a user of the work readiness credential
- Be the first in your industry to use the work readiness credential
- Be a champion for the credential in your industry
- Be a champion for the credential in your community

Who Are the State and National Partners?

- District of Columbia, Florida, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Washington state
- Center for Workforce Preparation of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Institute for Educational Leadership, Center for Workforce Success of the National Association of Manufacturers, National Governors Association, and the National Retail Federation Foundation.

For more information on how the WRC can benefit your business in FL,

- Contact Andra S. Cornelius at (850) 921-1119 or acornelius@workforceflorida.com
- Visit www.uschamber.com/cwp or http://eff.cls.utk.edu/workreadiness/eff_work_profile.htm

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Real world has a dress code, too, students find

Leave the flip-flops, T-shirts and jeans at home when you're going to a job interview, students from five high schools learned last week.

By MICHELE MILLER, Times Staff Writer
Published February 1, 2006

NEW PORT RICHEY - Ric Hartwell is more of a muscle T-shirt kind of guy.

But last week, the River Ridge High School senior donned button-down pinstripes and Oscar de la Renta.

Not too shabby.

The guys in the men's department at Macy's thought he'd look good in the jacket, said Hartwell, 18. "It's nice for interviews."

Exactly.

"You Don't Get a Second Chance to Make a First Impression" was the theme for Business Development Week's Education Day held last week at Marchman Technical Education Center.

Hartwell, an entrepreneur of sorts who is starting a personal training business, was one of a dozen students from River Ridge and Mitchell high schools to take part in a "What to Wear" fashion show for students enrolled in business programs at five local high schools.

What not to wear on an interview - flip-flops, jeans, T-shirts (especially those that show off your belly rings) also played into that, along with advice to make eye contact with the interviewer, smile and offer a firm, confident handshake.

Students from Hudson, Gulf and Ridgewood high schools also participated in the event, the latter two performing comical skits on the how to's of interviewing and good customer service skills.

"We usually have people from businesses come in to talk with the kids about this," said Pat Reeder, the career specialist at River Ridge. "We wanted the kids to take control of the program. I think it's more powerful than someone standing up and telling them what to do, what to wear."

Still, they got a little of that, too.

Rosalie Bennett, the ladies apparel manager at Macy's who emceed the show, offered her own advice.

For example, dress properly even if you're just picking up an application because some companies will

interview right there on the spot.

Jay Kuhns, vice president of human resources at Brandon Regional Medical Center and the keynote speaker at a luncheon for students and business community members, also weighed in. Be honest, be yourself and come prepared with some questions of your own, he advised students.

This year, Education Day was geared to work ethics and employers' expectations, said Carole Pearson, who heads the Education Committee for the West Pasco Chamber of Commerce.

At the luncheon, students shared tables with professionals, which provided a good catalyst for all sorts of discussion, Pearson said. "It's important for students to hear it from the business community."

Michele Chamberlin, career specialist at Mitchell High, praised the professionals who came to help with the event. "I'm amazed that they want to take this time with our kids," she said. "It's a great opportunity that these kids are getting. It gets them out of the classroom, gives them interaction with business people instead of just having a teacher lecture to them."

Workforce readiness

Florida, other states to certify job seekers' 'soft skills'

LEON LAZAROFF
Knight Ridder Tribune News Service

As lawmakers and educators struggle to improve high schools in the United States, businesses and labor unions say they are alarmed that even job seekers with a diploma can't function in the workplace.

It's a problem, they say, that threatens to cripple American productivity at home and competition abroad.

Discouraged by the work habits of many new employees, a handful of states, including Florida, are working to create a nationally recognized "work readiness" credential. Proponents say the credential would certify that a prospective employee understands the importance of "soft skills" such as punctuality, a willingness to accept supervision and an ability to work in a group.

"You'd think people would know to call in sick when they're not coming to work, but that's not always the case," said Michael Kauffman, an executive at Anoplate Corp., a 175-person metal manufacturer in Syracuse, N.Y. "We're having many more problems than in the past getting people who understand what it means to work in an office or a factory."

At a state job training and education center in New York City, the state's Workforce Investment Board recently began testing a "work readiness" exam developed by SRI International, a research group based in California.

Tests will also be held in Florida, New Jersey, Washington and Rhode Island, as well as the District of Columbia, which all contributed funds to develop the exam.

Job seekers enrolled at the Brooklyn Educational Opportunity Center will be given a two- to three-hour exam that will check for reading and math skills in addition to speaking and listening habits. They will also be given "situational judgment" questions to gauge probable work performance.

Organizers say the credential should be ready by spring 2006 and would be administered by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with local chapters and state agencies. Whether it would be required for high school students, said the Chamber's Sondra Stein, would be up to individual states.

Aaron Harewood, 20, entered the Brooklyn center last year after graduating from George Wingate High School, one of seven Brooklyn high schools scheduled to close in June 2006 after the state Department of Education classified it as "low performing."

Harewood, who has never had a job and is studying to receive a certificate at the center in computer technology, said a work readiness credential would probably help him find employment.

"In high school, they only focused on the work you normally do in college - not on work skills," he said. "You realize afterward that it would have been nice if you'd ever been aware of all this so when you face the real world you wouldn't be so unprepared."

Waiting and watching

In Illinois, the Chicago Public Schools' Office of Education To Careers has campaigned for the state to join the fledgling national effort.

Jill Wine-Banks, the program's director and a former Maytag Corp. and Motorola Inc. executive, joined the city's school system two years ago with a mandate to incorporate "work readiness" skills into the high school curriculum.

"Unions and business leaders told us we were doing a good job training students in technical areas but that it was these

'soft skills' that we take for granted that they were missing," Wine-Banks said.

Illinois has yet to decide whether to endorse the credential.

Julio Rodriguez of the Bureau of Workforce Development at the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, said Illinois already teaches job readiness through its One-Stop Career Centers, local offices that coordinate federal and state employment services.

"Behavioral skills are hard to quantify," he said. "We're all kind of watching (the pilot tests) to see what develops."

Moving forward

In March, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce took over responsibility for Equipped for the Future, hiring the Department of Labor official who had previously administered it.

With the chamber as the project's sponsor, Sherryl Weems, executive director of the Educational Opportunity Center at the University of Buffalo, said she is optimistic that more states will endorse the credential.

"We didn't want this to be a labor or education thing but rather to be an employer thing," she said. "So, it made sense for the chamber to act as an umbrella."

Skeptics of a work readiness credential warn that it could distract students and educators away from "hard skills."

Phyllis Eisen of the Washington-based National Association of Manufacturers, counters that while schools should always focus first on hard skills, those alone are no guarantee that younger workers can move into high-tech factory jobs.

She pointed to a 2001 National Association of Manufacturers survey of its members, later dubbed the "Skills Gap," as support for a work readiness credential.

Employers surveyed in the study reported that while 32 percent of job applicants possessed inadequate reading and writing skills, 69 percent lacked basic employability skills such as reading with understanding, speaking clearly, actively listening and resolving conflict.

"It's not an either-or proposition," Eisen said, referring to hard and soft skills. "For generations, the historic advantage of the U.S. economy was its skilled workforce, and right now, that's slipping away."

(EDITORS: STORY CAN END HERE)

While the AFL-CIO and National Association of Manufacturers have clashed over wage issues and foreign trade, Paul Cole, secretary-treasurer of the New York State AFL-CIO said the two groups agree that a more efficient and higher-skilled workforce can ensure that well-paying jobs are not exported.

"If we infuse education and job-training with an emphasis on 'employability skills,' then we develop workers who not only can get jobs, they can keep them as well," he said.

That's a point that resonates with Ana Rosado, 20, who dropped out in 9th grade and now studies at the Brooklyn Educational Opportunity Center.

"If you're not punctual or (don't) communicate well, you're not going to stay employed," she said. "I'd like to work a while, and afterward I would like to go to college."

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THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Today's News

Monday, February 7, 2005

High-School Graduates Are Poorly Prepared for Work or College, Survey Finds

By MICHELLE DIAMENT

As many as 4 in 10 high-school graduates are not ready for the demands that they face after graduation, whether they are going to college or to work, according to survey findings scheduled for release today.

Achieve Inc., a nonprofit organization created by state governors and business leaders that focuses on raising academic standards, surveyed recent high-school graduates, employers, and college instructors about the preparedness of young people entering college or the work force. The poll of 2,200 people was conducted in December and January.

According to a report based on the survey, college instructors thought that the recent graduates' greatest deficiencies were in writing and mathematics. Students largely concurred, with 81 percent saying they approved of graduation tests in math and English.

Many students who responded to the survey indicated that it was easy to slide by in high school, but said they would have worked harder if more had been asked of them, said Geoff Garin, one of the pollsters. In particular, students pointed to academic counseling and course requirements as areas to bolster.

One of the governors involved in the organization is Gov. Bob Taft of Ohio. "This survey should be a real wake-up call to the governors around the country," said Mr. Taft, a

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Republican. "We're hearing a clear message from our graduates that we do them no favors if we set the bar for performance too low."

Socioeconomic circumstances were not a decisive factor for success, Mr. Garin said. Rather a high level of expectation proved essential for graduates no matter what their goals, he said, because many of the same skills now are necessary for both work-bound students and those continuing their education.

The full text of the report, "Rising to the Challenge: Are High-School Graduates Prepared for College and Work?," is available on Achieve's Web site.

Background articles from *The Chronicle*:

- Undergraduates Study Much Less Than Professors Expect, Survey of Student 'Engagement' Says (11/15/2004)

- Core Curricula in High Schools Provide Inadequate Preparation for College Work, Report Says (10/15/2004)

- Report Being Sent to High Schools Outlines What College Freshmen Need to Know to Succeed (4/22/2003)

- High Schools Fail to Prepare Many Students for College, Stanford Study Says (3/5/2003)

- 'Report Card' on States and Higher Education Finds Better Student Preparation, Mixed Opportunities (10/2/2002)

- Report Finds the Majority of U.S. Students Not Prepared for College (10/5/2001)